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Project on Genetic Characterization, Domestication, Genetic Improvement and Culture of *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* in the Philippines

Commercial production of the freshwater prawn, *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* in the Philippines is not as developed as those in Thailand and Indonesia. Although studies on *Macrobrachium* sp. (or ulang as it is locally known), started at the Binangonan Freshwater Station (BFS) of SEAFDEC/AQD in the mid 80s, research efforts were discontinued because *Macrobrachium* sp. was considered a low priority species and emphasis was given to penaeid shrimps instead.

Later studies at BFS have been revived where results have shown that although *Artemia* is still the best natural food for *M. rosenbergii*, the acceptability and potential of the lower-priced *Moina* as starter feed for the prawn has been demonstrated. Moreover, results of other studies also seemed to indicate that farming of *M. rosenbergii* in cages in lakes is a viable alternative to pond culture.

The Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) at its National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center (NIFTDC) in Dagupan City has undertaken activities on the collection of wild stocks as well as domestication and propagation of *M. rosenbergii*. From their collections, one local strain of *Macrobrachium* sp. labeled as BFAR 1 was found to have better growth performance than an earlier-found strain labeled BFAR 0. The normal juvenile rearing period of BFAR 0 is 45-50 days, whereas BFAR 1 only requires 37-40 days.

BFAR established in 2004, a Task Force for “Ulang” Aquaculture with the National Freshwater Fisheries Technology Center (NFFTC) in the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, as the Task Force’s home base. The Task Force established various programs for the revival of freshwater prawn aquaculture in the country.

Freshwater prawn facilities in Northern Mindanao, Philippines: hatchery (bellow) and pond system (bottom)



Mr. Henry Dejarne adds humor to his presentation to the delight of the participants

Hatchery and pond culture experiments are also being conducted at the Mindanao State University at Naawan in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Results of a number of experiments could not yet be rationalized as these are still in the early stages of implementation. However, a progress report on the activities was presented during this Round Table Discussion.

